
Report to
The Vermont Legislature

Reporting Transitional
Services Outcomes

In Accordance with H. 449
Act 74 Sec. 2(d): An Act Relating to Foster Care Services and Supports

Submitted to: Legislative General Assembly

Submitted by: David Yacovone, Commissioner

Prepared by: Dana Lawrence, Director of Youth in Transition Programs,
DCF Family Services
Katherine Boise, Statewide Youth Development
Coordinator

Report Date: January 2011



Youth Success Stories.	3
Evaluating Outcomes of Transitional Services	4
AHS Collaborations	4
Research based practice and outcome collection	5
Act 74 Rules	5
DCF Youth Development Program	6
Youth Ages 15-22 Served by Youth Development Program	6
Post-Secondary Education and Training	7
College of St. Josephs STEPS Program	7

Youth Success Stories. . .

Since the passage of Act 74 in 2007, the lives of many young people have been positively affected by the availability of additional supports to ease their transition to adulthood. Here are some of their stories:

"I want to thank you and the wonderful people who run the extended care program for children past and present in Vermont state custody. The incidental grant of \$4,500 I was awarded helped me pay off past medical bills and a down payment for a vehicle. I'm so grateful for the help this program provides, and wished it was in place when I aged out of the foster care system back in 2006. As a lost young adult in this world full of many strengths and weakness, it was nice that this program was in place to get me back on my feet. The benefit of having my past medical bills paid has strengthened my credit report and relationship with creditors, so they see I want to do better in life. By repairing my credit I can now get adequate and fair financing on a vehicle. With a vehicle I will have timely and safe transportation for current medical issues and for work. I now will be able to attend night school with a vehicle, and advance my higher education. \$4,500.00 may not seem a lot when you compare it to a life time that us "aged out" foster children have ahead of us; but it's the fact that we are being considered and cared about with these grants that means the most to us. Thank you again for this WONDERFUL program, and the opportunity to head on the path to success!!"

"My semester just got over and I wanted to let you know how I was doing. I still want to thank you so much for helping me pay for the first year of my college career at Paul Smiths. College is great I have so many friends and the campus is awesome. I am friends with almost the entire campus and I live in a quad building to cut down on some costs at school. My roommates are awesome now and my classes are also. I have decided to double major in Hotel Resort and Tourism Management and Business and Entrepreneurial Studies. I would like to minor also but I am not sure what I want to minor in. This semester grades were awesome I have A's and B's and one C. I passed all of my classes this semester and did the best job as I could do on them. Soccer season was great our team lost a lot of games because only a couple people on the team including myself were actually dedicated. It was a fun season anyway though. I just wanted to check in with you and let you know how my first semester was going. I have talked to my social worker and told him all the good news. I hope you are doing good and if I don't hear from you before the holidays wanted to wish you a Happy Holidays."

We have experienced stable numbers or small increases in the number of youth accessing support for completion of high school and the adult living support components of Act 74, but have seen a significant increase in the number of youth accessing the flexible supports available to them through the housing and incidental living supports program. In last year's report, 10/01/08-9/30/09 58 youth accessed these supports. From 10/01/09-9/30/10, 128 youth received flexible housing and education supports.

Prior to the passage of Act 74 these funds were not available. Grant amounts provided to individual youth are modest and generally require a co-payment by the youth. The importance of these funds is well captured by the two testimonials above and many more.

Evaluating Outcomes of Transitional Services

Act 74, the Youth in Transition Law required the Department for Children and Families (DCF) to develop a “method for measuring, evaluating, and reporting outcomes of transitional services provided under this section to the house committee on human services and the senate committee on health and welfare annually by January 15.”

The Family Services Division is currently implementing data collection required for the Chafee Foster Care Independence Act’s National Youth Transition Database. In Federal Fiscal Year 2011, all states will collect baseline data on 17 year olds now in care. Two reports on baseline are due. The first is due 4/1/2011; the following on 4/1/2012. In subsequent years, we will follow these youth forward to determine what their outcomes have been. Once these data are available, we will have a much better sense of the impact of the services and supports we have added through Act 74. The division worked with its youth advisory board to make the question more youth-friendly in their wording, and to design an outreach approach.

AHS Collaborations

DCF Family Services’ Youth Development Program has commenced several important collaborations in the current year with other partners who assist youth transitioning to adulthood. These collaborations are designed to maximize access to services and supports to youth in a way that minimizes categorical barriers, pools resources, and achieves priority outcomes through shared best practice approaches. This collaborative approach is consistent with the needs identified in preparation for the passage of Act 74 and the results sought by it. The following entities are also actively partnering on implementation of a uniform practice approach and collaborative outcome data collection to support statewide service coordination for youth in transition.

- DCF Family Services Youth Development Program
- DCF Support Systems for Homeless Youth grant
- Vermont Coalition of Runaway and Homeless Youth (VCRHYP)
- Department of Mental Health SAMHSA project
- DAIL’s Vocational Rehabilitation’s Creative Workforce Solutions

The focus of the collaboration with DAIL’s Vocational Rehabilitation is on a 2-district pilot of Creative Workforce Solutions. The Department of Education (DOE), Department of Labor (DOL) and VCRHYP are the other partners in this project which emphasizes career exploration and employment.

DCF, VCRHYP and DOL are partners on a federally-funded grant focusing on support systems for homeless youth and green jobs. The grant is focused on housing, career development, employment, access to health care, transportation.

DCF is engaged with the Department of Mental Health's SAMSHA-funded project on transition-age youth. Together, we are focusing on shared youth governance trainings, client outreach and service coordination with the goal of establishing youth development and governance groups in each of the twelve AHS districts.

Research based practice and outcome collection

DCF Family Services and VCRHYP are working together on a shared data collection system that tracks the acquisition of developmental assets by youth which research indicates are predictive of youth success in adulthood. This approach is linked to training and practice oversight for both programs and is also included in the outcome data collection for the DMH SAMSHA grant.

Act 74 Rules

Rules promulgated in 2008 continue to be in place, and provide the regulatory underpinnings of our work. They are available on the public web site of the Family Services Division at:

http://dcf.vermont.gov/sites/dcf/files/pdf/fsd/rules/Transition_Age_Youth.pdf

DCF Youth Development Program

DCF Family Services through its Youth Development Program provides case management services to support youth exiting foster care through contracts with youth serving agencies in each of its twelve district office regions. The program provides assessment based life skills education to youth, and acts as the link to the education relational and housing supports provided under Act 74 as well as other state and community services.

Driver's Education Program

Act 74 also provides funds to support youth receiving driver's training, permit, and licensing costs. These funds are accessed through the Youth Development Program. During this report year 30 youth accessed funds to earn their licenses.

Extended Care

Act 74 provides funds to provide living supports for former foster youth completing their high school diploma, those living with adult living partners, and those who are establishing their own living situation. The administration of these three categories is governed by regulations called for in the statute and approved by legislative rules committee. Numbers of youth accessing these three categories this year are listed below.

Table 1: Extended Care	10/1/09-9/30/10
Support for Secondary Education	46*
Adult Living Partners	37
Housing supports	128
Total Youth Served	211

* This number reflects youth over 18 currently receiving financial support while completing their high school diploma. Those over 18 who have already earned their diploma between July 1, 2010 and January 1, 2011 are not reflected in this number due to reliance on payment status for the data. This data collection flaw is being addressed going forward to capture all youth in this status during subsequent report periods.

Youth Ages 15-22 Served by Youth Development Program

Youth Development Coordinators, case managers for the Youth Development Program have served 425 individual youth during the report year.

Post-Secondary Education and Training

DCF Family Services is continuing its efforts to improve post-secondary outcomes for foster youth through early career exploration, better educational preparation, college recruitment, retention and completion. A group focusing on those goals has been meeting for several years. Members of the group include former foster youth, college administrators, college student assistance professionals VSAC outreach counselors and Trio program staff.

Table 3 shows the number of former foster youth receiving outreach services from VSAC and the number receiving financial aid for full or part-time post-secondary education or training. Trio and other outreach services are provided to youth still attending secondary school for career development purposes as well as those attending post-secondary education to support their continued success. Numbers in Table 3 reflect older youth receiving services and financial aid as well as younger individuals who receive only services.

Table 3: DCF/VSAC Partnership	# of Youth Enrollments
VSAC Outreach Services	133
DCF/VSAC Partnership Number of youth who received federal Chafee Education and Training Vouchers funds. These youth also received Emily Lester scholarships, Pell grants and Stafford loans during school year 2009-2010	122

College of St. Josephs STEPS Program

In addition to the efforts of the higher education committee, the College of St. Joseph in Rutland has been sponsoring an innovative program for former foster youth which provides year round housing, support and educational programming to help these youth meet the challenge of enrolling and succeeding in college. Remaining in college after enrollment is a challenge for many youth and former foster youth also struggle with this. The STEPS program is providing a supportive environment to assist with those struggles. While not successful with all youth, the numbers of enrolling and remaining former foster youth are growing. This last fall semester 18 youth were enrolled for the fall semester. DCF Family Services is actively working with the school to enhance both recruitment and on-going success for youth in attendance.

Additional Information about DCF Family Services programs for youth in transition can be obtained by contacting Dana Lawrence, DCF Family Services, Osgood 2, Waterbury, VT 05671-2401, dana.lawrence@ahs.state.vt.us or 241-2153.